

June 10, 2009

**Public Notice for Water Quality Certification and/or Waste
Discharge Requirements (Dredge/Fill Projects)**

CDOT – Hwy 101, Rio Dell Roadway Rehabilitation
WDID No. 1B07124WNHU

Humboldt County

On June 5, 2008, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) issued a Federal Clean Water Act (CWA), section 401, Water Quality Certification for activities related to the proposed Highway 101 / Rio Dell Roadway Rehabilitation project (project) to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans). On May 8, 2009, the Regional Water Board Received a request to amend the original Water Quality Certification to allow additional access to an area within that would temporarily impact approximately 460 square feet of seasonal wetlands. The project will cause disturbances to waters of the United States associated with unnamed ephemeral drainages in the Eel River Hydrologic Unit No.111.00, Lower Eel Hydrologic Area No. 111.10.

The project is located from post mile (PM) 48.7 to PM 56.3 on Highway 101, which extends from the towns of Scotia to Rio Dell in Humboldt County. The purpose of the proposed project is to repair and upgrade road, lighting, and drainage culverts along the highway, which have become degraded over time. Caltrans proposes approximately 3-miles of ditches and asphalt overlays as well as metal beam guard rail repair. In addition, the project will include the repairs and upgrades to 21 culverts along the project, 10 of which are within areas with sensitive resources (ephemeral channels and/or seasonal wetlands). Additionally, the project will include the use of rock slope protection (RSP) to stabilize the embankment along the southbound Rio Dell/Scotia on-ramp (PM 51.75), use of RSP to daylight a 40-foot drainage culvert, replacement of rumble strips, and replacement of AC dikes along the project. The proposed project will also include an intersection upgrade at PM 50.6, which will lengthen the northbound and southbound turn pockets and northbound acceleration lane for safety purposes.

The proposed project will result in permanent and temporary impacts to waterways that are within the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdiction. For the purpose of erosion control and bank stabilization, Caltrans proposes rock lining channel outlets at nine culverts between PM 49.11 and PM 49.92. The scope of work proposed would permanently impact 204 square feet (63 linear feet) of unnamed ephemeral drainages and 161 square feet of seasonal wetlands associated with nine of the culvert repairs/upgrades. In addition, 5,376 square feet of seasonal wetlands will be temporarily impacted for the purpose of accessing the culverts. Caltrans has proposed creating and enhancing seasonal wetlands on-site to offset the permanent impacts to USACE jurisdictional waters. Noncompensatory mitigation includes the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for erosion control.

To offset the impacts to wetlands, Caltrans proposes the creation of 200 square feet of seasonal wetlands on-site. In addition, revegetation and willow planting will be

conducted along a 900-foot stretch of the project to offset the impacts to ephemeral streams. Mitigation to offset the temporary impacts to wetlands will include monitoring and maintenance to ensure the return of native plant species.

The proposed project designs include an increase of 12,000 square feet (0.26-acres) of pavement for the intersection upgrade at PM 50.6. Due to the increase in impervious surface within the project area, Caltrans has proposed two 10,000 square foot biofiltration areas at PM 50.6 for additional storm water treatment controls. Construction and post construction BMPs will be implemented to ensure erosion is minimized and controlled.

The applicant has applied for authorization from the USACE to perform the project under their Nationwide Permits No. 3 (maintenance) and 13 (Temporary Construction, Access, and Dewatering) pursuant to Clean Water Act, section 404. Caltrans has determined that this project is categorically exempt from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review [Class 1 Categorical Exemption (SCH No. 2007018155)]. In addition, Regional Water Board staff also determined that this project is categorically exempt from CEQA review (Class 1 Categorical Exemption) and has filed a Notice of Exemption. Caltrans has also applied to California Department of Fish and Game for a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement. The majority of proposed project activity is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2009. Construction work in all drainages will only be conducted during dry weather from the period of May 15 – October 15 annually; however, other project activities may be conducted year round. The entire project is expected to take six working seasons to complete and is anticipated to be completed in October 2015.

The information contained in this public notice is only a summary of the applicant's proposed road rehabilitation/construction activities. The application for Water Quality Certification in the Regional Water Board's file contains additional details about the proposed project including maps and design drawings. The application and Regional Water Board file are available for public review.

Regional Water Board staff are proposing to regulate this project pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA (33 USC 1341) and/or Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act authority. In addition, staff will consider all comments submitted in writing and received at this office by mail during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter and ends at 5:00 p.m. on the last day of the comment period. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Jeremiah Puget at (707) 576-2835 or jpuget@waterboards.ca.gov within 21 days of the posting of this notice.